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P56949**IN THE CLAIMS**

The following claims are pending before the Office:

1 1. (Previously Presented) A method for processing and separating an imbricate formation
2 of flexible, flat objects during product feed, comprising continuously feeding the items in an
3 essentially regular formation to a transfer module and transferring the items from said transfer
4 module to a conveyor module, wherein flat objects are fluently fed to a guide within said transfer
5 module, and the flat objects during their conveyance are brought into an obliquely standing position
6 by the guide, and the flat objects from this position are separated in a defined number from the
7 remaining flat objects by a separator, and conveyed away by a conveyor.

1 2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects are
2 fed onto a guide surface of the guide and are conveyed lying in an overlapping manner, wherein the
3 trailing edge of a flat object in each case lies over the leading edge of the subsequent flat object, and
4 the objects during the transport over the guide surface are continuously erected, whereby on removal
5 of the flat objects from the guide the obliquely standing position of the flat objects is inclined
6 opposite to a direction of said conveyance.

1 3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects are
2 folded sheets, wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over a respective
3 subsequent folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from the guide
4 means stand on their cut-edge side.

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1 4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the flat objects are folded sheets,
2 wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over the respective subsequent folded
3 sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from the guide means stand on their
4 cut-edge side.

1 5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the erection of the flat objects is
2 effected by active braking or acceleration of the flat objects at least one edge by way of conveyor
1 means.

2 6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects on removal are
3 actively transferred into an obliquely standing position in the conveying direction by way of folding-
4 over means.

1 7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects before removal
2 are displaced transversely to their main conveying direction.

1 8. (Original) A device for carrying out the method according to claim 1 with a product
2 feed, comprising a conveyor means with a transfer module arranged after this and with a conveyor
3 module for removal of flat objects from the transfer module;

4 wherein the transfer module contains a guide means which comprises a guide surface which
5 at least in regions is inclined with respect to the horizontal, and that on the side proximal to the
6 removal device there is arranged a brim or abutment.

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1 9. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the guide surface at least in regions
2 is designed concave or convex, or comprises at least two sections with a different inclination of the
3 guide surface.

1 10. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the inclination of the guide
2 surface at least in regions is more than 30°.

1 11. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 8, wherein the guide surface
2 comprises guide elements which serve for the regional acceleration and/or braking of the flat objects.

1 12. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 8, wherein the brim or the
2 abutment is arranged movable with respect to the guide means.

1 13. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, on that side of the guide means
2 which is proximal to the removal device, there are arranged active means for separating individual
3 objects or groups of objects.

1 14. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the brim or the abutment comprises
2 movable elements conveying the objects in the removal direction.

1 15. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, in the removal region of the

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2 objects, there are arranged means for transversely displacing the objects.

1 16. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, above the guide means, there are
2 arranged retaining means acting on the free edge of the objects.

1 17. (Previously Presented) A guide, comprising:
2 a path comprised of a first surface guiding leading lower edges of a plurality of flat,
3 flexible items to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface to an inclined
4 surface, said path supporting the lower edges of the items during progressive transformation in
5 orientation of the items into an imbricate array while the items advance from said first surface and
6 along said inclined surface; and
7 an abutment extending transversely above said path to obstructively engage seriatim
8 a lower portion of each of the items descending said convexly curved surface and terminate said
9 passage of each item along said inclined surface while the item is obliquely erect.

1 18. (Previously Presented) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of a mechanism
2 positioned to remove the items from engagement with said abutment by grasping the upper edges
3 of a defined number of the items and sequentially lifting the items grasped away from said inclined
4 surface.

1 19. (Previously Presented) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of said inclined surface
2 exhibiting an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

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1 20. (Previously Presented) A guide, comprising:

2 an abutment; and

3 a path comprised of a first surface positioned to continuously receive leading lower
4 edges of a flow of flat, flexible items, and a curved surface leading downwardly from said first
5 surface to an inclined surface terminated by said abutment while said path supports leading lower
6 edges of the items with said flow of the flexible items advancing from said first surface during
7 progressive transformation in orientation of the items within the flow into a formation with the items
8 oriented obliquely erect at said abutment.

1 21. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, comprising a conveyor positioned to
2 sequentially remove from said path, a defined number of the items embraced by said abutment.

1 22. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a
2 convex curve.

1 23. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a
2 concave curve.

1 24. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said first surface disposed
2 to engage cut edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first
3 surface.

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1 25. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said path engaging cut
2 edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first surface.

1 26. (Previously Presented) Guiding, comprised of:
2 receiving leading lower edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface
3 leading to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with upper edges of the
4 items trailing the lower edges during said flow along said first surface;

5 aligning the items by precipitating a shift in orientation of the items within the flow
6 as the items progress from said first surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined
7 surface with an abutment extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an obstructive
8 engagement of a lower portion of a forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is
9 obliquely erect; and

10 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 27. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in claim 26, comprised of removing the
2 items from said engagement by individually engaging the upper edges and sequentially lifting the
3 items corresponding to the upper edges away from said inclined surface.

1 28. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in claim 26, comprised of providing said
2 inclined surface with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

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1 29. (Previously Presented) Guiding, comprised of:

2 receiving cut leading edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface leading
3 to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with folded edges of the items
4 trailing the cut edges during said flow along said first surface;

5 aligning the items within the flow by allowing the flow to progress from said first
6 surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined surface with an abutment extending
7 transversely across said inclined surface causing an obstructive engagement of a lower portion of a
8 forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is obliquely erect; and

9 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 30. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in clam 29, comprised of removing the

2 items from said engagement by sequentially grasping individual ones of the folded edges and
3 individually lifting the items corresponding to the folded edges grasped away from said inclined
4 surface.

1 31. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in clam 29, comprised of providing said

2 inclined surface with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.